

11-7238

August 27, 1959

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The Honorable Wilton B. Persons
The Assistant to The President
The White House
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Jerry:

Under date of July 21, I received from the President a copy of his memorandum to the Secretary of State transmitting a paper dated July 20, 1959, entitled "A Strategy for Peace," written by a man skilled in the dissemination of information. The President requested that my comments on this paper be submitted confidentially to you by September 1st.

The author of the paper addresses himself to the broad question of public opinion formation on a world-wide basis, including both the Communist "denied areas" and the Free World.

Insofar as concerns open and public means of influencing public opinion and events, these are largely functions of the Department of State and USIA, using overt media for disseminating public information, and hence are outside the specific charter of this Agency.

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This thoughtful paper contains many suggestions with which I am in full agreement. It suffers, however, from the fact that the writer is obviously not aware of what is being done [redacted]. If the author is a man who could be taken into our confidence and briefed on a wide variety of projects which are underway, I feel that his comments would be substantially modified and that we, on our part, could obtain more helpful suggestions from him.

One of the first acts of the President, in 1953, was the organization of the President's Committee on International Information Activities (generally referred to as the Jackson Committee), which reported to the President on June 30 of that year. The able men composing this committee made a thorough examination of the field of "psychological warfare." This report not only resulted in the formation of the OCB, but also had a very direct effect on our own work in this Agency. In my opinion it is the most comprehensive report available covering the very problems the present paper presents.

The author of this paper devotes considerable attention to the problem of getting information to the Eastern European satellite countries. [redacted]

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[redacted] I agree with the author that we should develop here an effective weapon for keeping the Communists off balance. There are those who differ.

I feel the author places too much emphasis on the continuing effectiveness of the refugees from the satellite/countries,

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In particular the author advocates the use of Czechs, Poles, and Russians in the campaign to influence the peoples of these countries. Here, as indicated above, I am only in partial agreement. Where these nationals maintain close touch with what is going on inside their former homelands, keep their ideas fresh and virile, they can be used. If they become regarded as ex-patriots, refugees and exiles, their influence in their former homelands is limited; their views often distorted. Great discretion in the use of exiles is essential. [redacted]

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What the author says with regard to measures to counter the Communist efforts in this hemisphere, and to expose what the Communists are doing here, is thoroughly sound. Over the past months, particularly since the Twenty First Party Congress in Moscow, when we gained clear-cut evidence of Communist policy in Latin America, we have been emphasizing and publicizing Communist techniques in this area. More could, and should, be done.

In general, coordination in government in this general field is better than the author opines. [redacted]

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As the author says, ideas can become so powerful that they penetrate all barriers, and cited the principle of self determination proclaimed by Woodrow Wilson toward the close of World War I. This is true — I was working on this very program in 1918, and saw the effect of the Wilsonian principles on the German people and then on the German armies, though still unbeaten in the field, who lost their will to combat and sought an armistice. In World War II, the unfortunate "unconditional surrender" slogan steeled the Nazi forces to fight to the bitter end.

It may well be that we are now approaching a time when something similar to the Wilson experience could be repeated. The idea of something like a "crusade for peace" as dramatized by the President's recent initiatives might be developed and brought home to the Russian people in a way to accelerate their slow evolution toward knowledge of the truth, and in this way the Communist dictatorship might be undermined.

I agree with much that the author says on pages 19 - 23, where he analyzes the nature of the subtle perversion of Communist propaganda in trying to make us believe that theirs is just another political party and not, as it is, a completely different way of life.

The author concludes with a suggestion for setting up a new office in the White House as a sort of nerve center in the war of ideas. I believe that useful work could be done,

and has been done, as mentioned in the President's memorandum, by those who have served him in the capacity of special assistant to advise on "psychological warfare." I doubt, however, whether an office of the magnitude and with the functions described in the present paper would be helpful. Its staffing would be most difficult and would draw away vitally needed persons from existing departments and agencies. There are all too few competent people willing to serve government in this area of work.

The volume of the information, the complexities of the problems, and the breadth of coverage required by such an office would tend to make the writer's suggestion difficult of effective realization without important changes in the present allocation of responsibilities in our government.

Faithfully yours,

Allen W. Dulles

Allen W. Dulles
Director

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